

"This country needs an exit strategy from the civil war in Iraq. Though the bill before the House tonight is not perfect, it is a step in the right direction to bringing our men and women home, and toward allowing the Iraqi people to control their own destiny. I will vote for this bill because it is a change from the President's failed 'stay-the-course' policy."

The House of Representatives is poised to pass a bill this evening appropriating \$124.2 billion to support the troops in Iraq, as well as to improve the health care for returning soldiers and veterans, for continued Hurricane Katrina recovery for the Gulf Coast, to fill major gaps in homeland security, and to provide emergency drought relief for farmers. Besides providing these funds, the bill imposes certain requirements on President Bush with regard to the conduct of the war in Iraq. Specifically, President Bush would be required to certify that the Iraqi government is meeting certain diplomatic and security benchmarks. If he makes that certification, deployment of troops out of Iraq would begin no later than October 1, 2007, with the goal of completing the redeployment within 180 days.